



# Fact Sheet for Schools: PCBs in Caulk School Checklist

## ✓ School Checklist

### ☐ Was your school built or remodeled between 1950 and 1978?

Many older schools and older buildings built or remodeled before 1978 have been found to have caulk containing PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls). These chemicals can have adverse effects on human health, so children and teachers need to be informed about potential risks.

### ☐ Do you see walls or window sills in your school with cracking caulk?

As caulk ages, it cracks and flakes from the source. This leads to PCB-laden dust. Also, PCBs can, over time, be released from caulk into the air. Find out if your school has PCBs by calling a professional to test for PCBs in the air or, if caulk is peeling or visibly deteriorating, by having a professional test the caulk.

### ☐ Have PCBs already been detected in your school's caulk?

If so, caulk with the highest levels of PCBs should be removed in the short term. Ultimately, the goal is to remove all PCB-contaminated caulk at levels greater than 50 parts per million.

### ☐ Do children touch surfaces frequently or play in soil around their school?

Yes, young children can put their hands in their mouths after touching PCB-contaminated surfaces, which could seriously impact their health. Wash children's hands and toys often to reduce potential exposure.

Soil around schools and buildings may also contain PCB caulk dust or flakes. This would include playground soil and soil surrounding building foundations. Children can accidentally swallow the soil after handling it when outdoors, or the soil may be tracked indoors from shoes onto carpet and floors where children have a greater risk of ingesting it. Teach children to wipe and remove their shoes and to wash their hands after playing outside.

## School Advisory: Talking Points for Teachers and Daycare Staff

### Why should you be worried about PCBs in caulk?

High levels of PCBs in the body can cause adverse effects on the immune, reproductive, nervous, and endocrine systems. PCB exposure could result in cancer.

### Can PCBs be found in and around my school?

PCBs are harmful chemicals sometimes found in schools and other buildings built or remodeled before 1978, and are found in and around building joints and other places, including:

- Cracking and flaking caulk
- Contaminated soil
- Masonry adjacent to windows
- Indoor air that has been exposed to PCBs
- Paint, electrical transformers, and light ballasts.

PCBs were not added to caulk after 1978. Therefore, in general, schools built after 1978 do not contain PCBs in caulk.

### Are my children at risk for PCB exposure?

PCBs accumulate in the body in high levels only after prolonged exposure to the chemical. Follow the recommended procedures to reduce exposure. Restricting children from areas where PCB-containing caulk is located, promoting safe work practices during renovation activities in schools, and removing caulk safely as part of a PCB removal or renovation project reduces the potential for exposure.

### How can you prevent PCB accumulation in the body?

- Keep children from touching caulk or surfaces near caulk
- Keep children away from soil that may contain PCBs
- Clean the floor, walls, and window sills regularly with wet cloths
- Wash children's hands and toys often.
- Improve ventilation by opening windows or adding exhaust fans.

### Contact

Call EPA's PCBs in Caulk Hotline: 888-835-5372 to learn more about PCBs in caulk and to get information on PCB specialist professionals in your area.



EPA-747-F-09-003